

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2143

ANSWERED ON:06.08.2001

WATER CRISIS

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Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "TERI warns against severe water scarcity by 2050" appearing in the Times of India dated July 5, 2001;

(b) if so, the Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI) has revealed that there may be shortage of water in most of the parts of the country in the next few years;

(c) if so, whether the efforts made by the Government to generate more resources to overcome water scarcity have been proved futile; and

(d) if so, the facts thereof and the steps the Government propose to take to redeem the situation?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SMT. BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(a) & (b) Yes, Sir. Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI), in their study "Directions, Innovations and Strategies for Harnessing Action (DISHA)", has projected that the country will go from the present state of water stress (annual water availability less than 1700 cubic metre per capita) to a state of water scarcity (annual water availability less than 1000 cubic metre per capita), with average annual per capita water availability of 750 cubic metre by 2047. TERI has further projected that seven of the twenty agro-ecological zones of the country will have a situation of water scarcity by 2047.

According to the international criteria, a situation of annual water availability of less than 1000 cubic metre per capita is considered as scarcity condition. However, as per the assessment made by Central Water Commission, it is estimated that due to increasing population the average annual per capita water availability may come down from 1869 cubic metre at present to about 1350 cubic metre by 2025 AD and 1240 by 2050 AD at the national level. Due to the spatial variability of rain in the country and also because of variation in population density, per capita average annual availability of water in different basins presently varies from 14,057 cubic metre in Brahmaputra-Barak basin to 307 cubic metre in Sabarmati basin. Out of 20 major basins in the country, eight basins are presently having per capita water availability below 1000 cubic metre per year. By 2050, 12 basins are likely to face water scarcity when the projected perspective population of the country would be at 1.64 billion. Further, the temporal variability in the rainfall creates temporary scarcity of water in certain years.

(c) Development of water resources in the country since independence has resulted in an increase of food grain production from less than 50 million tonnes to 200 million tonnes in 1999. This has been made possible with the creation of a live storage capacity of 177 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) by construction of large dams upto 1995. With the help of these storages created and other minor irrigation schemes, an irrigation potential of 90 Million hectare (Mha) has been created upto the end of the Eighth Plan against the ultimate irrigation potential of 139.9 Mha in the country.

(d) In order to meet the growing demand of water in the country, projects, to add an additional storage capacity of about 75 BCM are under construction and for 132 BCM are under planning. Further, the Government of India has been extending financial assistance under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme since 1996-97 to State Governments to help them complete the ongoing irrigation projects early. Government of India is also promoting rain water harvesting through Watershed Management Programme, artificial recharge of ground water and roof-top rain water harvesting under the sector reform project of Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme under the Ministry of Rural Development, for which technical and financial assistance is provided to the State Governments and other implementing agencies. Central Ground Water Board has also taken up pilot studies for artificial ground water recharge. Assistance is also extended to State Governments under Command Area Development Programme for bridging the gap between potential created and utilised. As a long term measure, National Water Development Agency established in 1982, under Ministry of Water Resources, have formulated National Perspective Plan for Water Resources Development which envisages interlinking between various peninsular rivers and Himalayan rivers for transfer of water from surplus basins to water deficit basins.